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PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

UNITED STATES.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General, Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.]

Reports from San Francisco, Cal.—Status of plague—Plague prevention work, San Francisco and vicinity—Outgoing quarantine transactions.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Blue reports:

November 9. Total cases of plague verified to date, 90; deaths, 57.

November 13. Record to date: Cases, 93; deaths, 59.

November 14. One new case of plague to-day, fatal; diagnosis confirmed by bacteriological examination. Record to date: Cases, 94; deaths, 60.

November 15. One new case of plague to-day, an Italian; diagnosis confirmed by bacteriological examination. Record to date: Cases, 95; deaths, 60.

November 16. One new case of plague to-day, a Californian; diagnosis is confirmed by bacteriological examination. Record to date: Cases, 96; deaths, 60.

The following is a report on plague prevention work in San Francisco and vicinity to November 8:

The disease seems to be on the decrease, and it is believed that the cases now being reported represent all that are occurring in San Francisco. The district commanders and their men are becoming more familiar with the work, and better coordination of their efforts is being secured. They have learned more about the rat and its habits and are thus better able to trap and poison rats. Last week 13,000 rats were trapped and found dead from poison. Of the 4,500 examined microscopically 7 were infected with the plague bacillus. The number stated above does not express the entire number killed, as many have died in the sewers and other inaccessible places; in fact the sewer men state that they have never before seen so many dead rats in the sewers.

The poisons used have included plaster of Paris flour, phosphorus paste, and arsenic paste. The best results so far have been obtained from phosphorus and arsenic pastes. Feeding experiments conducted in some of the districts seem to prove that these pastes kill the rat in from 6 to 7 hours.

The scheme of organization includes a general headquarters and 12 districts. At the general headquarters the executive work is conducted, including the preparation and issuance of orders, the receipt and transmission of reports of cases, the collection and tabulation of statistics, the routine work relating to accounts and expenditures, and the answering and filing of correspondence. A laboratory

is also maintained for the verification of plague cases, both human and rodent, and the prosecution of research work bearing upon the subject in hand.

Each district in which plague has occurred is in charge of a Service officer, who has a headquarters centrally and conveniently located. These offices have telephonic connection, and a clerk for the tabulation of reports, the filing of the card index of the sanitary survey, and the preparation of reports for the general headquarters. The personnel of the districts includes sanitary and assistant sanitary inspectors and a corps of men proportionate to the size of the district and the amount of work to be done therein. The men are employed in placing traps and poisons, in closing rat holes and rat runs, in burning rat food, and destroying rat-harboring places. A central commissary has been established, from which poisons, traps, and other supplies are issued to the districts on proper requisition.

Weekly meetings of the district commanders are held for the discussion of the work in hand and the best measures to be adopted. This mutual interchange of ideas has been productive of much good.

A bounty of 10 cents each has been offered for rats. Besides killing off large numbers of these pests this serves to bring home to the people the necessity of ridding their premises of rodents.

An inspection of the dead is maintained, 2 special medical inspectors being employed for the purpose, and no dead body is permitted to be removed by an undertaker until the inspector has viewed it and given his consent. The sick are being treated in a rat-proof compound located on the grounds of the old City and County Hospital. A plague camp with ample accommodations for 50 patients has been established at Army and De Hara streets, and is now ready for occupancy. Practically all cases are removed to the hospital. When they are kept at their homes a strict quarantine is maintained.

The State board of health has appointed a bacteriologist and 2 medical inspectors exclusively for plague work.

The same general line of work is being carried on in Oakland as in San Francisco. The city officials there have given full cooperation and are pushing the campaign vigorously, under the immediate direction of Passed Assistant Surgeon J. D. Long. The county supervisors have made an appropriation for the inspection of the sick and dead within their borders.

Alameda has not yet cooperated in the work. Efforts have, however, been made at Alameda at rat extermination, a total of 3 rat catchers with a promise of the fourth being employed for the purpose. Every opportunity has been offered the health officials of Alameda to inspect the work in San Francisco, that they may fully acquaint themselves with modern methods of combating plague.

An active campaign was instituted last week at South San Francisco, San Mateo County, under the direction of the health officer. Passed Assistant Surgeon W. C. Rucker was detailed to confer with the supervisors of San Mateo County with regard to the work.

One of the objects of the campaign in the State has been to draw public attention to the desirability of the prompt recognition of plague and the application of preventive measures. The results have been gratifying. Many inquiries have been received and answered by letter and by the distribution of literature bearing on the subject. Several medical societies in the State have included a plague sym-

posium in their programmes and have requested addresses from Service officers. Several requests have been received from lay organizations. These have been complied with in every instance and it is believed that much good has resulted therefrom. This method of procedure should result in the discovery and eradication of any latent foci possibly existing in the smaller and more isolated towns.

Dr. Blue further reports plague-prevention work at San Francisco carried out during the week ended November 9:

Sick inspected	61
Plague cases found	4
Dead inspected	68
Plague among dead inspected	2
Premises inspected	5,108
Houses disinfected	63
Houses destroyed	6
Nuisances abated	266
Rats found dead	493
Rats trapped	2,162
Bounty rats received	1,231
Poisons placed	215,714
Rats examined bacteriologically	1,138
Rats found infected with bacillus pestis	17

Plague-prevention work at Oakland, Cal.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Blue reports, November 11:

Antiplague operations in Oakland, Cal., week ended November 9.

Sick inspected	7
Dead inspected	36
Premises inspected	2,901
Houses disinfected	12
Nuisances abated	410
Rats found dead	70
Rats trapped	421
Poisons placed	29,885
Notices served	124
Ships inspected	36
Notices served to ships	124
Necropsies held	3

Outgoing quarantine transactions.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Hobdy reports, November 6:

Week ended November 2. One hunderd and eighty-two vessels were certified to. Of this number 116 were disinfected, and 66 previously disinfected were certified to as having observed the required precautions. The work is progressing satisfactorily.

Report from Los Angeles, Cal.—Work of sanitation and rat destruction.

Surgeon Brooks reports, November 12:

The following is a summary of the work of sanitation and rat destruction performed in the two weeks ended November 7.

Total for two weeks ended November 7:

Inspections by physicians, 943; inspections by sanitary inspectors, 7,600; inspections by assistant sanitary inspectors, 23,419; vacant places cleaned, 586; occupied places cleaned, 1,071; alleys cleaned, 4;